QuitoLima (ZQL)

Lima to Quito 20 days, departing 17 May 2012

Comfort Zone: Basic Luxury
Physical Challenge: Easy Hard
Trip Style: Overlanding
Route: Lima to Quito
Length: 20 days
Transport: Overland expedition vehicle
Accommodation: Mainly hostel/hotel, with some campsites and wildcamps (35% camping, 65% hotels)

Ratings for this trip

Comfort Zone: Moderate

Moderate Comfort Level. These trips allow you to get off the beaten track with a few of your home comforts. On OVERLAND TRIPS expect there may be some wild camps, but with a predominance of campsites with good facilities (often with upgrades to rooms available) or staying in small hotels. Hotels will range from basic up to reasonably comfortable. Sharing will be on a 2, 3 or 4 person basis. On ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS we will have standard style accommodation, usually budget or tourist-class (2-3 star) accommodation with private facilities. Some accommodation may be on a multi-share basis. Transport will be a mixture of local and privately hired.

Physical Challenge: Moderate Fitness

MODERATE FITNESS: You will travel through areas that may be physically challenging. For example you may be at altitude some of the time. Depending on the trip, activities may include treks of 3-4 hours across hilly terrain, horse-riding and other adventurous activities. A moderate level of fitness is required.

Countries Visited

Ecuador

Ecuador is a small country with a diverse landscape including highlands, volcanoes, numerous national parks, stunning Pacific beaches, and the enthralling Galapagos Islands.

The Amazon rainforest has the greatest bio diversity on the planet. And it's possible to take trips deep into the rainforest to see jaguars, monkeys, iguanas and uncountable numbers of insects. Off the coast is the Galapagos Islands, arguably one of the world's most prestigious wildlife destinations.

If heart racing activities is more your thing then Ecuador has plenty to offer. Surf the waves, trek through the foothills or step out of the ordinary and try some mountaineering.

Aside from the outdoors and wildlife there are lots of great coloninal towns or cities. And Quito has a more relaxed atmosphere than most Latin American capitals. Lying in a hollow at the base of Volcano Pichincha, the old city is a maze of steep cobbled streets with finely carved overhanging balconies. Its mixture of colonial and new architecture together with its European and Indian cultures make this a fascinating city.

As you explore, the discovery of food will be found and the choice of a traditional meal is hard to turn down. Ecuadorian cuisine is again diverse, and different regions boast different meals. Meat, potatoes and rice are popular in the

mountain regions, where as the coastal areas boast fantastic meals containing marinades of fish onions and delectable seasonings.

There are many types of music in Ecuador and the most popular is the rhythm filled, dancing type which can get you up on your feet and joining in with the sounds of panpipes, bamboo flutes, drums and charangos.

With so much to offer and explore - Ecuador is the place to be if you want to try something new every day.

Peru

Peru is home to some of South Americas most glorious landmarks, and the opportunity to partake in an activity seem endless.

The capital is Lima and it is known of the City of the Kings, it was founded by the Conquistador Pizarro in 1535. The elegant architecture runs through the capital and the cultural effects of the museums are all tucked away in this classic city.

Any introduction to Peru wouldn't be complete without the Inca civilisation. Cusco is the ancient capital of the Inca empire. Even today, many of its buildings have original Inca stonework as part of their structure. The Incas had a highly organised and labour intensive society. They managed to conquer vast tracts of land and, through strong central and regional government, retained control over an empire that spanned South America, from mid Colombia in the north, to the middle of Argentina in the south and lasted for over four centuries.

The most famous Inca legacy is undoubtedly the Inca Trail the ancient set of pathway in the Andes that include the route up to the fantastic site of Machu Picchu. You can trek through the countryside making your way through the unspoilt land and view the breathtaking scenery that carries on to the horizon and beyond. When you reach Machu Picchu you will realise what a beautiful place it is, no photograph can really do the site justice. The long forgotten site was rediscovered by Hiram Bingham in 1911 and is simply awe inspiring and is a must visit place in South America.

Peru is flowing with fabulous landscapes and this continues at Lake Titicaca. On the border of Peru and Bolivia it is the highest navigable lake in the world. In the culture of Lake Titicaca, comes the sound of panpipes. An Andean music form, this woodwind instrument plays tranquil sounds and is a nice form of relaxation. The Charango is the national instrument of Peru. This stringed instrument was from a Spanish influence and has a distinctive sound. The taste is as distinctive as the sound and the national dish of Ceviche. This is a fish based dish where the fish is 'cooked' in lemon or lime juice.

The history and sites of Peru are outstanding, but also the friendly welcome visitors receive make Peru one of the most enjoyable countries in the world to visit.

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Lima

Thu 17 May 2012

Border information: If you are starting in Lima, enter Peru at Lima Airport.

Free time to explore Lima, with a group meeting at 18:00 hrs. We overnight in a comfortable hotel.

Hotel for the night: Hostal Bonbini
Hostal Bonbini
Jiron Cailloma 29
Centro
Lima
Tel: +51-1-4274681

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the Gold Museum & Catacombs of Lima	USD 20
Overnight stay in colonial Lima	Included in tour

Lima

Lima is a city of hidden beauty. Dive in and explore the Peruvian capital's streets, parks and plazas and you will discover a real gem of a city. Infact there's so much to see here, a city tour is a great opportunity to find out about more about the rich history of Lima itself and Peru as a whole. The city was founded by Conquistador Pizarro in 1535 and was originally the administrative centre for Spain's Vice royalty in South America, making it the continent's most important city for nearly three centuries. It became a city of great wealth financed by the massive quantities of gold and silver that were mined in the area.

Whilst you are here there are many museums you can visit, such as the Museo de la Nacion and the Gold

Museum, which showcase the finest artefact's from the country's many ancient civlisations. You can also visit the finely preserved catacombs at the Church of San Francisco, and take in a bit of local culture at an evening folklore show.

Day 2: Huaraz

Fri 18 May 2012

Full day 530kms drive to Huaraz situated high up in the Andes. We stay in a local friendly guesthouse.

Activity	Approximate Cost
3 nights in the spectacular mountain scenery of Huaraz	Included in tour

Huaraz

Huaraz is situated high up in the Andes, dominated by the highest, tropical mountain range in the world, the Cordillera Blanca, and Peru's highest peak, Huascaran. It offers great opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, horse riding and rafting. You can even visit the Pastoruri Glacier. In addition there's the interesting Museo de Ancash exhibiting some precisely trepanned skulls and a goniometro - an early version of theodolite. There are also tours of the Chavin Ruins and Llanganuco Lake on offer, which may be of interest. From here it is also possible to visit the Willcawain Ruins, one of the outposts of the great Wari civilisations.

Day 3 to 4: Huaraz

Sat 19 May to Sun 20 May 2012

Non-driving days with free time to enjoy the hiking/ climbing activities in and around the mountains of Huaraz. We stay at the same guesthouse.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Trek to the glaciers from Huaraz	USD 30
Trek, bike or ride in the the stunning Cordillera Blanca	USD 20

Day 5: Huanchaco

Mon 21 May 2012

450kms drive to Huanchaco, visiting Lambayeque for the Lord of Sipan Museum visit en route. We stay at a campsite with good facilities.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Guided tour of Moche Pyramids and the Chimu city of Chan Chan	Included in tour

Huanchaco

Once the capital of the ancient Peruvian Moche civilisation, Huanchaco is a small town on the Peruvian coast that is rapidly acquiring a reputation for the quality of the surfing off its relaxed beaches. Wandering along the sea front you will come across the local fishermen's "caballitos de tortora", curved reed boats that they leave propped up in groups together on the sand.

Huanchaco is an ideal location from which to explore the numerous archaeological ruins the surround nearby Trujillo, such as the enormous pre-columbian complex of Chan Chan, a vast adobe city constructed by the emporer of the Chimu people, as well as the world famous Moche pyramids the Huaca del Sol and Huaca de la Luna.

Day 6: Huanchaco

Tue 22 May 2012

Visit to numerous ruins in and around Huanchaco including the enormous ruins of Chan Chan and the world famous pyramids Huaca del Sol and Huaca de la Luna. Camping with good facilities

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit to the Lord of Sipan Museum	Included in tour

Day 7: Punta Sal

Wed 23 May 2012

510kms drive to Punta Sal, on the shore of the Pacific Ocean. We camp at a hostel

Activity	Approximate Cost
2 nights stay at Punta Sal on the Pacific coast	Included in tour

Punta Sal

Situated on the shores of the Pacific Ocean in a long, curvy bay, Punta Sal is a haven of sun and sand. The warm and tranquil waters are a pleasure to swim in and there's also the opportunity to set out on fishing trips and boat trips along the coast line. For those who prefer to stay on dry land, horse riding along the beach and salsa lessons can be arranged, or just kick-back in a hammock and laze the day away, enjoying the peace and quiet of this beautiful spot.

Day 8: Punta Sal

Thu 24 May 2012

Non-driving day with free time to enjoy the beach and activities at Punta Sal. Second night camping at the same hostel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Try horse riding, fishing, salsa and surfing at Punta Sal	USD 20

Day 9: Cuenca

Fri 25 May 2012

Border information: Exit Peru at Tumbes, enter Ecuador at Tumbes.

285kms drive across the border into Ecuador, to the beautiful colonial Cuenca, Ecuador's third-largest town. We stay in a stunning local guesthouse.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overnight in colonial Cuenca	Included in tour

Cuenca

Cuenca is Ecuador's third-largest city and it's small centre is home to some beautiful architecture. This small university town is a pleasure to wander around and explore, take to the streets and you'll discover impressive churches that date back to the 16th and 17th Centuries, attractive colonial buildings, tranquil plazas and lively markets. The Ecuadorians consider it the finest city in the country and many of its buildings are constructed from marble and decorated with stunning woodwork and ironwork. Cuenca is also the home of the Panama hat, and you can visit some of the famous hat factories, where you can watch the craftsman and marvel at their skill first-hand.

Because of all the students who are based here, the town has a lively night-life and there are some good bars and restaurants to choose from. Top that off with an evening stroll around the Plaza and you'll have spent the perfect day enjoying the city.

Day 10: Riobamba

Sat 26 May 2012

In the morning we have free time to explore Cuenca and visit the famous Panama Hat factory. We then drive 250kms to Riobamba and stay in a local hotel.

Day 11: Chugchilan

Sun 27 May 2012

An early start leads to a 350kms drive on the northern section of the spectacular Quilotoa Loop to the town of Chugchilán. We stay the night in a fantastic hostel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overland around the stunning Quilotoa Loop	Included in tour

Chugchilan

Set on the slopes of the Rio Toachi Canyon, Chugchilán is our base for 2 nights where we either stay in a wonderful eco-lodge or an equally fantastic hostel. From the front door of the lodge, several day hikes are available, the most famous being one from Lake Quilotoa which is considered to be one of the best hikes in Ecuador.

We will drive from Chugchilán to Quilotoa where you will be able to climb down the crater to the waters edge before we begin a 4-6 hour guided trek, mainly downhill, back to our eco-lodge base. A moderate level of fitness is required as the trek is at altitude but the walking itself is not too strenous.

Day 12: Chugchilan, Lake Quilotoa

Mon 28 May 2012

An hour's drive brings us to the town of Quilotoa to see the stunning Crater Lake and begin one of Ecuador's best day hikes back to Chugchilán. We will trek with a local guide and the mostly downhill trek takes between 4-6 hours. There is however a section towards the end of the trek with a steep incline which you will need to be physically fit for.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Hire kayaks on Lake Quilotoa	
Go Mountain Biking around Chugchilan	USD 20
Trek from Quilotoa to Chugchilan	Included in tour

Lake Quilotoa

Lake Quilotoa is a beautiful volcanic crater lake located at 3800 metres (12,400 feet) between the towns of Zumbahua and Chugchilán. Its emerald water spans two kilometres. Local legend claims it is connected to the ocean and is therefore salty and sulfuric. Quilotoa is an active volcano, the last major eruption was over 850 years ago.

It is possible to hike down from the crater rim to the lakeside. The descent takes 30 minutes and climbing back up takes about an hour. It is possible to swim in the lake, but the water is very cold (5° celsius). If the climb back up from the laguna is too strenuous, you can hire a mule to ride for a few dollars.

The lake also lends it's name to the Quilotoa Loop, given to the winding circuit of spectacular dirt roads that connect Lake Quilotoa to Latacunga and the Pan-

American Highway. The roads that lead away from Latacunga are unpaved, winding and have spectacular views of the mountains, rivers and verdant landscape. We will head to the town of Chugchilán on the northern section of the loop and after a 2 night stay head out on the southern section of the loop allowing you to see some of the more remote people and culture of the central Andes of Ecuador.

Day 13: Chugchilan, Rio Verde

Tue 29 May 2012

In the morning we will drive the southen section of the Quilotoa Loop before heading to the beautiful town of Rio Verde, 300kms in total. We stay at a campsite with great facilities

Activity	Approximate Cost
2 or 3 nights camping at the stunning Rio Verde	Included in tour

Rio Verde

A few kilometres from Banos, is the small town of Rio Verde, named after the clear green water of the river that flows through the town. A number of waterfalls are found along its course, the most spectacular being The Devil's Cauldron ('El Pailon del Diablo'), a 20-minute walk out of town. Whilst staying here, you will have the opportunity to take part in optional adventure activities like as horse-riding, canyoning, mountain biking and rafting, as well as making the short trip into Banos to visit the thermal springs.

Day 14 to 15: Rio Verde, Banos

Wed 30 May to Thu 31 May 2012

These are non-driving days with free time for range of adrenalin activities or a possible visit to nearby Banos. The nights are spent at the same campsite.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Half day rafting at Banos, including lunch	USD 75
Half day canyoning at Banos	USD 45

Banos

Set in the hillside of the Tungurahua volcano is the exquisite town of Banos. Tungurahua may be the biggest volcano in Ecuador, but it is also one of the most popular to climb. This creates hiking opportunities and if you explore you will discover the thermal baths and gorgeous waterfalls. Banos is also the perfect place if you want exciting bike rides when the unknown always lies ahead. Pitch black tunnels, sheer drops - it is a place for the bold, it is a place for the daring and most importantly, it is a place that will bring out the adrenaline seeker in us all!

Day 16 to 18: Ecuador Amazon Rainforest Stay

Fri 01 Jun to Sun 03 Jun 2012

We have a very early start today followed by a 300km drive to Coca. From Coca we board a boat for a 2 hour journey along the Rio Napo and deep into the heart of the Amazon rainforest for a 3 night stay where we camp by a wonderful lodge run by the local Kichwa community.

During your 3 nights here you will take trips out into the rainforest on foot and by boat to explore for wildlife as well as getting involved with the local community at a truly magical place.

Activity	Approximate Cost
3 days exploring the Ecuadorian rainforest at a Kichwa community run project	Included in tour

Ecuador Amazon Rainforest Stay

Our Amazon base lies to the south of the Cuyabeño Reserve and to the north of the Yasuni National Park, within which thecommuni ty protects over 50,000 acres of land. With a vast land holding of over 100,000 acres, both north and south, of the River Napo, the people of the Sani Isla community live in and protect one of the largest privately-held areas of rainforest in Ecuador.

You will be amidst a vast area of primary rainforest bursting with tropical plants and trees, 13 species of primates, an impressive number of mammals and an amazing variety of birds. The extensive network of natural streams and lagoons are home to the infamous Piranha and mysterious Black and Spectacled Caiman. The area is a haven for rare, vulnerable and endangered species, including the Pink River Dolphin, Giant Armadillo, GiantAnteater and Woolly Monkey, the elusive Paradise Jacamar and magnificent Harpy Eagle.

Day 19: Quito

Mon 04 Jun 2012

An early boat ride brings us back along the Rio Napo to Coca from where we rejoin our overland vehicle and drive 300kms to the country's capital, Quito. We stay in a local, friendly hotel in the city.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overnight stay in historic Quito	Included in tour

Quito

Quito has a more relaxed atmosphere than most Latin American capitals. Lying in a hollow at the base of Volcano Pichincha, the old town is a maze of steep, cobbled streets with intricately carved, overhanging balconies. Its mixture of old colonial and modern architecture and the mix of European and Indian cultures make this a really fascinating city. Wandering around, you will come across stalls displaying Indian textiles, colourful wall hangings, jewellery, pottery and woodcarvings - and the old town has some of the best examples of Spanish colonial art and churches anywhere in the Americas.With so much to see and do, it is well worth extending your time in South America to ensure you experience all that Quito has to offer.

Day 20: Quito

Tue 05 Jun 2012

Free time to explore Ecuador's capital Quito.

Border information: If you are leaving in Quito, exit Ecuador at Quito Airport.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Take a trip on El Telerifiqo, the world's second highest cable car	USD 4
Visit the Museo De La Cuidad	USD 2

Visa Information:

Important Notes

The routes, activities and places visited described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.

We intend following the planned route but exact night stops cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our basic planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. By their very nature overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, often in areas without western infrastructure. You should expect that some these areas do not adhere to western safety standards.

Departures leading in or out of Rio Carnival

If the truck you are on has come in or out of Rio Carnival then there is likely to be more than just one truck on your specific departure date due to the popularity of trips at this time of year. Because of this the trucks are likely to operate on slightly differing itineraries however still visiting all the highlights listed. The presence of extra trucks makes for a great atmosphere leading to or from the greatest party on earth!

Physical Preparation

Physical preparation for South America Itineraries

South America is diverse continent from high altitude, to the steamy Amazon, to baking deserts. You should therefore be prepared for the full gambit of climates. There will be time for hikking and other activities such as horse riding and you will need to be reasonably fit. Overland travel can be demanding - long, rough travel days, dusty conditions can be challenging to some. You will need to be fit enough to help every day with the camp chores (cooking, washing up, general camp set up) as well as putting up and taking down your own tent. There are some long driving days and some early morning starts. The step up into the overland vehicle, while not overly high can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down the step at least 8-10 times a day. By and large the South America trips have a good range of hotel accommodation mixed up with camping so that life is not too rough.

Altitude

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE).

Because of this it is very important that you make yourself aware of the cause and effects of travelling at altitude and monitor your health during this trip.

For further information please click here to download our AMS information sheet or check out the following website www.high-altitude-medicine.com

Your leader will also hand you a copy of the AMS information sheet during your trip as well as holding a short meeting prior to travelling to altitudes above 2800m/9200ft for the first time.

If you are starting your trip in a destination above 2800m/9200ft we strongly advise reading this information prior to arrival.

Visa Information

Most countries we visit on our travels will require visas. Some are best obtained before you leave home and others can be obtained en-route. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for obtaining visas is yours, we will endeavour to assist you wherever possible.

The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. The information provided is given in good faith and we do try to keep the visa information as up to date as possible. Please be aware though that rules do change, often without prior warning, which is why it is important that you check for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance you can choose to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy /consulate. However our recommendation is that you use a visa agent to assist you with your applications. While this does increase the cost it will make the process much easier for you. Dragoman have teamed up with 'The Visa Machine' to create a safe, secure, hassle-free way of obtaining visas and visa advice. Our unique link within their website is designed to make the visa process as straightforward as possible. Simply go to https://dragoman.thevisamachine.com and click on your region of travel followed by your trip route and 'The Visa Machine' will advise you about not only the required visas but also the dates by which you should apply. 'The Visa Machine' can then assist you in the actual visa application thus taking all the worry and hassle out of the process. This should apply for ALL nationalities and countries of residence.

As you will need to submit your passport together with your applications, we recommend that you avoid making any travel plans in the weeks leading up to your departure. However if you do need to travel in this period please let us know as soon as possible so that we can help you work out the options for your visa application process.

Peru

Nationals of most countries including Australia, the EU, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK do not need a visa for tourist visits of limited duration to Peru

Flying to Central or South America via the USA

If your flight to central or South America is via the USA then you MUST obtain an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) before travel.

An ESTA can be obtained online via the following link and paying the appropriatefee - https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/

Personal Spending

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on trips in South America, we recommend you allow between a minimum of US$15 and a maximum of US$30 per day. This amount is usually lower in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru but slightly higher elsewhere.
This will covers expenses such as your drinks, meals whilst out and also when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

What else you need to know

Currencies & Cash

It is not really worth trying to buy local currencies before you travel. Bear in mind that many countries have strict regulations about the amount of their own local currency you are allowed to import - if you are found with amounts in excess of the allowed amounts, it may well be confiscated!

For obvious security reasons we hesitate to recommend you bring lots of cash with you, a sensible mix of cash and ATM cards is best. Most of our past passengers have said they wished they had been told to bring more cash. Apart from the

convenience of being able to change money in many more places, you will sometimes get a much better exchange rate for cash.

More and more people are choosing to travel with cash passports such as TravelEx cards (you can visit www.cashpassport.com for further information on these). This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change in South America with passengers and our leaders experiencing huge frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. However due to a recent counterfeit scam central banks in several South American countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile) have temporarily banned the circulation of $100 notes bearing a series 2001 production date and a serial number starting with the letters CB or CF and ending in B2. The serial number is printed in green on the emblem. Banks and moneychangers in most countries will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are dated from 2003 or later. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on. Cash machines are readily available in most areas but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most commonly accepted, but be prepared for very high commission charges. Please do not rely on cards for daily use, as they are not always accepted outside of larger towns and cities. If you are taking traveller's cheques, we recommend that you should only take those issued by American Express. Please note that Thomas Cook traveller's cheques may be used in some places, but are becoming more difficult to change. Brazil can be difficult for changing forex, it's handy to have a cash card as backup. Please bring a mixture of small and large denominations as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over $50. Kitty contributions should be at least half in cash and be in the same denominations and currencies as suggested above. Any proportion of kitty contributions paid in travellers cheques should be increased to cover the commission charge incurred in exchanging them.

Pre and post trip accommodation and connecting flights

At Dragoman we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of your joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay. Dragoman can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on.

While Dragoman is happy to assist with booking your pre and post trip accommodation, it is important that you understand you may be able to book your own room at a cheaper rate directly through the hotel or on the internet. Our additional accommodation prices are based on the hotel's rate plus an administration fee. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival, however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer as not all hotels offer this service.

Accommodation on tour

Dragoman overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying in hotels and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip, in accommodation ranging from twin to multi-share. The type and variety of accommodation is determined by conditions on each of our routes. The campsites will range from rather basic to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars. In some cases it may also be possible to upgrade locally to bungalows, lodges or even tree-houses. One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will wild camp. This allows us to get far away from the tourist crowds to some beautiful, secluded spots. We will also arrange as many village or local homestays as possible, allowing us to get close to indigenous populations and ensures our money stays within local communities.

Group size?

The maximum group size we take on our overland journeys ranges from 19 to 22 depending on the geographical location, however the average number of passengers is more likely to be around 16.

Please note that there is an overlap of 2 trips in Zanzibar. This means a group starting a trip in Nairobi for example will visit Zanzibar at the same time as groups starting their trips in Dar es Salaam. In practical terms this means there could be up to 44 group members in Zanzibar at the same time.

Who travels with Dragoman?

Our passengers come from around the world and are always an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that overlanding should be open to as many people as possible and so although we have a minimum age limit of 18, as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One of the beauties of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

Our Community

At any time before or after you book you can join our community - Dragoland. This is a great place to ask questions before you travel and catch up with your fellow travellers once your trip has finished. You can share photos, videos and stories You can also download a selection of free travel apps. See the home page to sign in, it's free and easy.

We also have a Facebook page where travellers regularly swap info with each other - you can join here

Our crew and guides

Our crew are passionate about travel and always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a Dragoman leader. Our crew undergo the most intensive training program of all overland companies, spending 10 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK and then up to six months on the road as a trainee. On all Dragoman overlanding trips two western crew who are responsible for the group and the overall organisation will accompany you. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad knowledge of the places visited and to offer suggestions of things to do and see. In East and Southern Africa we will also have an African camp master/cook who is in charge of running the camp and organising all of the meals. Their knowledge of the local produce makes shopping at the markets great fun and you will learn how to prepare and cook some unusual dishes. In the rest of Africa, South America and the majority of Central Asia and China we use local guides who may stay with us for just a few hours or will actually travel with us for some or all of the journey. In these cases they become a third crew member and are able to offer their local knowledge as well as a real insight into the lives of the local people.

(If travelling in East & Southern Africa, also please see the note about our code-share crew)

Your tour leader has a duty of care to all of their passengers and therefore they have the authority to ask passengers to leave the trip if they require medical assistance, are behaving in an anti-social manner or refuse to comply with local laws and customs. In all matters relating to the trip, the leader's decision will be final and we appreciate your respect of this.

Medical conditions

We ask all of our passengers to declare any pre-existing medical conditions and in some cases you will be asked to complete one of our medical questionnaires. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude we also require all passengers to complete an altitude questionnaire. The ratings for each trip are a good indication of how challenging they are and in some cases passengers should be prepared for some long driving days and possible limited facilities. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns.

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to region and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in. It is essential that you check with either your doctor or a travel clinic in good time before you travel.

In the UK we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive, up to date vaccination and health information. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

A good source of up to date information is the World Health Organisation - http://www.who.int/en/

Malaria

Get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your vaccination centre for the most up-to-date requirements

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wear long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, tent doors or, if sleeping out, use a mosquito net. Wear repellent applied directly to the skin or soaked into clothing.

Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permetherin solution provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights, in hotel rooms but cannot be used inside the tents.

Meals and group participation

On an overland journey you are more than just a passenger, you're part of the crew, pitching in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. We operate a rota system, dividing the group into smaller units of 5 or 6 people, so that these duties are shared equally amongst the group. These jobs will include things like collecting water and firewood, loading the back locker, supervising the kitty and food stores etc. While camping on overland journeys, all meals will be included in the kitty and this means that you will be working as a group to prepare meals and cook for your group. (On trips south of Nairobi we have a cook on board the truck, however you will still be required to help prepare meals). If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your crew at your welcome meeting. A typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, cereal and something hot such as eggs or pancakes as well as tea and coffee. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto, pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local cooking. Generally our passengers find the more they put into a trip, the more they benefit from it.

Responsible tourism & code of conduct

Dragoman is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We are dedicated to making sure that we adopt a responsible attitude to the areas through which we travel and believe that our trips should benefit the local people and their environment. Dragoman recognises that we are guests of local communities and strive to make these communities our partners, so that they benefit directly from our visit.

You can find full details of Dragoman's responsible tourism policy linked from the home page. All passengers are required to obey all laws of the countries through which we pass. This particularly applies to the smuggling of contraband and possession of narcotic drugs, firearms, antiquities and ivory. Any passenger found contravening such laws or customs may be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Overland travel and security

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly equipped overland vehicle, with safes, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in much of the world. We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt whilst travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items (although most of these can be locked in the safe whilst you are on the trip) and advise passengers to leave any valuable jewellery, watches etc at home. Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on hand to offer advice.

Please note: Any personal effects that are left on the truck, even if they are stored in the safe, are left at your own risk and Dragoman cannot be held responsible for any damage or theft that may occur.

The safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a major priority of Dragoman. With this in mind we monitor world events very closely. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. Dragoman makes operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources:

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice

Reports from other travel companies and local suppliers

Leaders reports from off the road

Local contacts we have built up over 29 years of experience

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. You should always make yourself aware of the travel advice before you book and again before you travel. Below are links to some of the websites

Britain. http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country

Australia. http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/

New Zealand. http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/

United States. http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Canada. http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

Dragoman has comprehensive passenger liability protection and tour operator insurance. These policies have total indemnities of £3,000,000 and £10,000,000 respectively. This is in addition to local vehicle insurance and your personal travel insurance.

Emergency contact

We have a dedicated 24 hour telephone number which should only be used once you have left the UK and in the event of a real emergency. Should you need to call the number, we will do what we can to help but please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please let us know and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in theses trip notes. If you cannot get through leave a message and a contact number as these will be regularly checked and the crew informed if necessary.

Emergency Number: +44 (0) 7985106564.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel. As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding and that the 24 Hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries – for example they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes. Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas. We recommend that any policy has the following minimum levels of cover: Medical (incl. repatriation) £5,000,000 Personal Liability £5,000,000 Cancellation and Curtailment £5,000 Loss of Baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice.

Issues on the trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on customer_relations@dragoman.co.uk. You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

Passports

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or "visitor's" passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for you trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

Luggage & Kit List

Although you will not have to carry your main bag long distances you will need to help load and unload them onto the truck. For this reason we recommend that you use a backpack or soft bag rather than a heavy suitcase. During your trip your main luggage will be kept in the back locker so you will also need a small daypack. This can be used to carry your camera, water bottle and other personal effects for daily use.

The size of baggage that can be brought on this tour is limited by the locker space on the truck. Different trucks have different-sized lockers however to be safe we recommend that your bag be no larger than 66cm deep, 30cm wide, and 30cm high. The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is maximum 20kg. Backpacks should not have an external frame unless it can be easily removed and stored separately to avoid damaging other people's luggage.

Your clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats (except on routes between Nairobi and Cape Town where ground mats are provided).

The clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in, which will vary depending on which part of the world you're heading to. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats*, so you'll need to bring those with you. Think about the climate and altitude of the areas you'll be travelling to, there's nothing worse than being cold at night so it's worth investing in a decent sleeping bag if it's likely to get cold. And remember even when it's warm during the day, it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

**Ground mats are provided on our non "in-depth" overland trips that run in South and East Africa, between Nairobi and Cape Town.*

For a general idea of what you need this list provides a guide:

- Sleeping bag - Check the expected climate en route. Nights in desert and mountain regions can be very cold in winter months
- Mattress or compressed foam
- A day pack is useful for short hikes in the countryside, wandering around cities, etc and also for keeping inside the vehicle for items used during the day
- 2 sets of comfortable travelling clothes (light, easily washable cotton clothes are best)
- 1 set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out. Women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf for visiting places of worship
- 2 pairs of shorts
- Sun hat or warm hat if trekking
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- Warm sweater/fleeces
- 1 waterproof jacket with hood
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/boots (or ankle height canvas jungle boots)
- 1 pair of sandals or flip-flops
- Underwear and socks (thermals are also a good idea if you are travelling to altitude or to the desert as it can get very cold at night)
- Swimwear
- 2 small towels
- Washing kit, including a small mirror
- Clothes washing detergent, small scrubbing brush & washing line (just a length of cord)
- Head torch/flashlight with spare batteries & bulbs (only the 3 standard sizes of round 1.5v batteries are widely available en route)
- Passport photos (average of 2 per country for which visas will be applied for en route)
- Good water bottle at least 1 litre
- A pouch or money belt worn inside your clothing, or unobtrusive pocket sewn into the inside of a pair of loose fitting trousers, is a must.
- Alarm clock
- Pocket calculator (useful when exchanging money)
- Writing materials & notebook/diary
- Multi purpose knife
- Cotton sheet sleeping bag (or sheet folded and sewn up on 2 sides). It will help keep your sleeping bag clean, and can be used on its own on warm nights.
- Mosquito net - The tents supplied by us have mosquito netting and you will only need a net if you think you will sleep out under the stars a lot of the time.
- "Wet Ones" (moistened tissues) and hand gel
- Toilet paper – this can be purchased almost everywhere en-route but one roll is worth packing
- Assorted sized plastic bags - protects clothing and equipment from dust and damp

For a comprehensive kit lists take a look at the Dragoman kit list that Nomad Travel have created. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount on all equipment purchased either online or in store. Click to see the kit lists www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list

Water

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 liters of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.

Please avoid the purchase of bottled water by using the chemically sterilized water stored in the purpose built storage tank or in water jerry cans in your Overland vehicle. You are free to refill your bottle as many times a day as you like. You are helping the environment and your hip pocket!

Personal medical kit

All of our trucks have a fully stocked medical kit onboard for use in emergency situations only. Therefore in addition to this we recommend that you purchase your own personal medical kit. In the UK we have teamed up with Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics to produce the Dragoman Travel Medical Kit. It has been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contains everything you would need for any minor accidents. For more details please visit their website:

nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit

Electrical equipment

Your vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt socket so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12 volt adapter - the type that can be used from a cigarette lighter in your car. Please be aware that only one piece of equipment can be charged at a time and it will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle's batteries low. Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electricity points so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adaptor for your specific charger.

The kitty

The Kitty is a group fund paid separately from the trip price at the start of your trip which covers all things that the whole group does, such as:

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park entrances, excursions and local guides).

It is an amount that each passenger puts into a central fund and is monitored by the Dragoman crew. It's payable in full at the start of your trip, and in instalments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips

The kitty system is very unique to over landing as it allows us to have flexibility on the road. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally.

The kitty advertised in the brochure is an estimate at the time of printing. Local inflation and costs vary throughout the year and so we review kitties on a monthly basis. Once you book your trip it is very important that you check our website on a regular basis and just before departure for any changes to the kitty amount.

Your kitty can be paid in a mixture of US Dollar cash and local currency and most of our travellers choose to bring a cash passport with them for withdrawing local currency (you can visit www.cashpassport.com for further information on these). This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM to give to your leader within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change around the world with passengers and our leaders experiencing huge frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips.

Continuing your trip

Having an amazing trip and met a great group of people? Having too much fun to go home yet? If on your trip you decide you would like to continue, then why not speak to your trip leader who can advise you of the cost and availability of continuing your journey.

Contingency emergency fund

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond Dragoman's control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although Dragoman will help organise travel arrangements, in circumstances outside Dragoman's control you should be prepared to contribute towards the costs and therefore we ask you to bring along a 'Contingency Fund' of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a decent limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely voluntary. The Dragoman crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it. On a number of our trips, we also use a local guide as well as our own Dragoman crew. These guides live and travel with you through their home country and it is usual to tip them when they leave. We recommend USD10 to USD15 per person.

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey, once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, information and kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these Trip Notes

These trip notes were printed on 20/06/2013